

# Implementation Plan

The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan

## Public Hearing Draft

Implementation describes the framework for implementing the draft Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. This public hearing draft is scheduled at the Planning Commission on December 19, 2008. See <http://www.stpaul.gov/compplan> to view drafts of the other chapters of the plan. Comments on this draft can be directed to [penelope.simison@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:penelope.simison@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

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# Implementation

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### **Objective of implementation**

This section outlines how the policies in the Comprehensive Plan will be implemented. State statute requires that the City's ordinances, programs, and fiscal tools be consistent with the policies in the Comprehensive Plan. This is one objective of an implementation program.

Just as importantly, action steps are critical to efforts connecting the policies of individual chapters with each other. It is achieving this nexus between components of the built environment – for example, land use, transportation, and housing – that will be instrumental in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Each of the six chapters in this document includes a section outlining action steps for implementing the policies in the chapter:

INSERT PAGE NUMBERS OF IMPLEMENTATION SECTIONS IN SIX CHAPTERS

### **High priorities for action**

Certain imperatives stand out for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, high priorities for action without which Saint Paul's future can be realized. These high priorities are important for the city and for its ability to be an effective collaborator in the region (see pp. ///).

- Providing housing choices for everyone. As Saint Paul's demographics change, particularly more couples without children, empty nesters, and large immigrant families, it is critical to have a diverse housing stock in mixed income communities.
- Strengthening neighborhoods hurt by mortgage foreclosures. Foreclosures and the vacant houses they produce make families more vulnerable and jeopardize the future of the affected communities.
- Capitalizing on the potential of the Central Corridor. The construction of light rail transit in the Central Corridor, between the downtowns of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, provides opportunities for the city to realize its potential as a complex, sophisticated urban center with denser housing and employment centers.
- Laying the foundation for more jobs that pay a living wage. The City and its development partners are in the position of assuring there is land, cleaned of contamination from decades ago and with the infrastructure needed for the information-based economy, so that businesses are able to establish themselves and grow, and provide jobs with a living wage.
- Maintaining public infrastructure and facilities. Saint Paul has a sizeable investment in facilities and infrastructure – streets, utilities, parks and recreation centers, and libraries are examples. For the city to remain vibrant and be a vigorous urban center, these must be well maintained to extend their useful life.

- Securing an expanded transit system. Saint Paul needs a transit system that provides more routes through parts of the city that are not well served and more frequent service. There are greater numbers of transit dependent people living in the city and the cost of energy is making vehicular travel too expensive.
- Pursuing projects and programs to reduce the carbon footprint. Although reducing the carbon footprint involves global and national strategies, the City can contribute to the effort by managing development activities so that buildings are constructed to reduce the amount of energy used during their operation. Moreover, the City can encourage residents and employees to reduce their use of vehicles and rely more on transit, to reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming.
- Providing opportunities that enrich residents' lives. Schools, parks and recreation centers, and libraries all create avenues for people of all age groups to pursue interests and desires for learning, for play, and for participation in the community.
- Protecting natural resources. The Mississippi River runs through Saint Paul and is the most obvious natural resource in the city. There are also lakes – Como, Phalen, and Beaver – as well as dozens of parks, thousands of boulevard trees, and miles of trails. All contribute to the ecology of the city and to enriching the lives of residents.

### **Legal requirements**

State law mandates the Comprehensive Plan include specified features and components related to implementation:

- Official controls. These are ordinances, fiscal tools, and other programs.
- Capital improvement program. The five-year CIP is a list of infrastructure projects, including estimated cost and funding source.
- Housing implementation program. It includes the programs and fiscal tools that implement the housing policies.

### **Official controls**

Zoning ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance will be revised to be consistent with the plan, as required by state law. A number of zoning studies, each intended to implement specific policies in the Land Use, Housing, and Parks chapters, are listed in Appendix //. The Zoning Ordinance specifically deals with key natural resource issues, including, for example, erosion, steep slopes, and tree preservation. Studies identified in the Land Use chapter will specifically focus on permitted densities in existing or new districts that can be used to achieve growth targets for the city. Zoning regulations for the Critical Area, implementing the Mississippi River Corridor Plan (adopted 2002), are pending approval by the Planning Commission and Council.

Subdivision ordinance. The subdivision ordinance provides for the orderly development of land. Provisions in the ordinance also address such issues as providing adequate public facilities, protecting ecological features, and promoting the development of affordable housing.

Heritage preservation ordinance. Heritage preservation is provided for in the Preservation Ordinance, Chapters 73 and 74 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, which is authorized by state statutes, including Municipal Heritage Preservation (Section 471.193) and the Minnesota Historic District Act of 1971. The ordinance establishes the Heritage Preservation Commission and gives it the authority to survey historic resources, designate historic resources, and review alterations to designated properties. In 1984 the City became a Certified Local Government, part of the national Historic Preservation Program, meaning Saint Paul's commission meets federal and state standards. The City also works with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for federal and state review of proposed projects, including the Section 106 process and environmental reviews. The Historic Preservation chapter recommends revisions to the ordinance and its provisions (Policy // in the Historic Preservation chapter).

Fiscal tools. The City uses three fiscal tools to fund development projects and capital improvements:

- Capital Improvement Bonds (CIB) provide the most basic funding for yearly investment in capital facility improvements.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is used for brownfields remediation and re-development of a core city. Extraordinary public costs are needed to remove blight that otherwise prevents redevelopment and job creation. However, legislative restrictions limit the use of TIF not only for economic development, but also for redevelopment and environmental remediation. The City supports changes in the regulations to better facilitate the use of TIF for redevelopment and brownfields remediation.
- The Sales Tax Revitalization Program (STAR), also known as the "½ cent sales tax program," is a flexible funding program that provides support for community-based development opportunities. The STAR board, as well as the Mayor and the City Council in their reviews, considers Comprehensive Plan policies when awarding STAR funds for these projects.

Options for funding City development projects and capital improvements have become more limited in the last decade. To address this issue, the City must develop approaches and mechanisms that respond to the loss of fiscal tools and declining resources. To that end, the Planning Commission will establish the Infrastructure Task Force to study innovative financing for municipal infrastructure. The task force, staffed jointly by the departments of Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Parks, and Financial Services, will be comprised of citizens with expertise in the fields of infrastructure and finance, as well as community representatives.

#### **Capital Improvement Program (CIP).**

The City maintains a five-year capital improvement program. The current program for the years 2008-2012, is detailed in Appendix ///. The program is developed through the Capital Improvement Budget process, a

bi-annual process that includes recommendations from the community-based Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee, proposals by the Mayor and approvals by the Council. Projects are eligible if they finance the acquisition and physical development of City-owned land and buildings and have a useful life of at least 10 years. Many of the redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization proposals in this plan will require capital improvement investments by the City. The CIB process relies, in part, on the Comprehensive Plan and individual geographic plans to identify capital projects that will further their objectives.

### **Housing implementation program.**

The Housing and Land Use chapters lay out a broad range of programs and tools intended to implement their policies:

- Affordable housing. Strategy 3 of the Housing chapter, ///, includes policies that will facilitate the construction and preservation of affordable housing and expand housing options. Moreover, Strategy 3 acknowledges the City's share in the regional need for low and moderate income housing and assures, insofar as possible given market considerations, the production of lifecycle housing and housing at all income levels.
- Specific housing programs focused on affordable housing are administered by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), assisted by the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED). These programs focus on the development and preservation of affordable housing, the promotion of private market housing development, and assistance to low and moderate income households to purchase and rehabilitate housing units:
  1. Emergency shelter grants;
  2. Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC);
  3. Tax-increment financing (TIF);
  4. Multifamily housing revenue bonds;
  5. City Living for mortgage loans and home improvement loans;
  6. The American Dream down payment initiative;
  7. Don't Borrow Trouble campaign; and
  8. Mortgage foreclosure prevention program;
- Fiscal tools. The City uses such tools as tax increment financing (TIF) and revenue bonds to finance housing projects.
- Official controls. Title 6 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code and Chapter 717 of the Administrative Code provide regulatory guides for housing programs managed by the HRA. In addition, the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances are frameworks for the construction of new housing units, including affordable and lifecycle housing. In particular, the Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts include design provisions that facilitate higher density housing.

The City enforces codes to regulate the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of housing. These national building, electrical, and plumbing codes have been adopted by the State of Minnesota, including the building, electrical, and plumbing codes.

- Higher density development. Both the Housing and Land Use chapters include policies that guide the development of housing in specific areas of the city where higher density housing is intended to facilitate the construction of affordable housing.

### **Other implementation tools**

Small Area Plans. The Comprehensive Plan lays out broad approaches on key elements of the built environment. Its policies are applicable throughout Saint Paul, but they need to be translated into recommendations that address issues in specific communities and neighborhoods and that are integrated into small area plans, district plans, and plans for special districts. The City will continue to adopt summaries of its geographic plans as addenda to the Comprehensive Plan. The summaries will include the policies and action items that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and relate to the City's development policy. Moreover, the summaries will identify the policies and action items that refine land use and other policies for the specific geographic area.

To that end, the City will continue to use, and strengthen as appropriate, the following procedures to prepare small area plans and other geographic plans:

- Guidelines for the preparation of geographic plans, including coordination between the City and individual communities, to ensure that the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are realized.
- A strengthened review process to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Adopted geographic plans are addenda to the Comprehensive Plan. Review of each plan will use an interdisciplinary focus by staff from several City departments to assure that, when they are adopted, discrepancies between them and adopted citywide plans are reconciled so the Comprehensive Plan is internally consistent.
- Broad participation, including district councils, community development corporations, local businesses, non-profit organizations, and organizations that reflect Saint Paul's diversity.
- This Comprehensive Plan incorporates the policies of ///small area plans and district plans adopted during the last /// years. Appendix // lists the adopted small area plans, describing their key features. The location of these plans are depicted on Figure ///.

Economic development. The City, working through the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, assists developers with redevelopment, rehabilitation, and contamination cleanup of commercial properties. In addition, the City also provides financial and technical assistance to commercial businesses, non-profit organizations, developers, and neighborhood groups.

Site plan review. Site plan review, which is under the authority of the Planning Commission, is a coordinated, inter-departmental process that considers a range of development issues, including, but not limited to, zoning, design, utilities, emergency vehicle access, traffic, stormwater management, parking, and

landscaping. Site plan review considers all development proposals with the exception of single one and two family residential structures.

Intergovernmental grants. When appropriate, the City seeks funding from a variety of governmental sources for specified redevelopment activities. Sources include, for example, the tax base revitalization accounts managed by the state Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Metropolitan Council and federal funds from Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency.

### **Saint Paul in the metropolitan region.**

Saint Paul and other urban centers can neither exist nor flourish in the absence of close working relationships with other cities in the region, as well as with other government agencies and private, non-profit organizations. Collaboration between these entities is critical to implementing the objectives in the Comprehensive Plan so the city's future can be realized. Moreover, collaboration is necessary because so many issues cut across municipal boundaries. These issues are complex and are becoming increasingly so. Resolving requires government and organizations to work together purposefully and creatively to forge relationships and devise approaches that may not have been tried previously, or tried previously and abandoned.

Elements of the Saint Paul/metropolitan collaboration are:

- Continuing the partnership between Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The two cities are currently involved in two high profile efforts, including reducing the carbon footprint and dealing with foreclosures. Sustainable Saint Paul is a compendium of projects and programs, many of them replicated in Minneapolis, to address the climate change issue and institute more green practices. The National Community Stabilization Trust – four national organizations focused on solutions to the foreclosure problem – selected Saint Paul and Minneapolis as a pilot area for coordinating the acquisition of foreclosed properties so they can be rented or sold, primarily to low- and moderate-income families. The work of the trust is funneled through the Minnesota Foreclosure Partners Council, which includes both cities, the Family Housing Fund, the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation, Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service, and LISC.
- Beginning a dialogue with first-ring suburbs on concerns they share with the two core cities. First-ring suburbs face many of the same issues as do Saint Paul and Minneapolis, including an aging housing stock and the need for contemporary employment centers for businesses in the information-based economy.
- Pursuing legislation that will enable urban centers to pursue redevelopment vigorously. More intensive use of the existing urban fabric of urban centers is critical for the success of the region in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Issues such as climate change and shifts in the economy necessitate that policy makers find solutions that encourage reinvestment. Saint Paul will pursue changes to state and federal policies, including a revision of the existing limits on the use of eminent domain, to enhance the opportunities for core cities and older suburbs.



- Working with the Legislature and the Metropolitan Council to contain sprawl. Development at the fringes of the metropolitan area, without attention to its impact on the core cities and the first-ring suburbs, has the potential to dilute efforts to reinvest in the core cities.
- Securing an expanded, more efficient transit system. Climate change, dwindling energy supplies, and the rising cost of energy are compelling reasons to expand the existing transit system be expanded, both in the frequency of service and the numbers of routes.
- Restoring the Mississippi River corridor. Minnesota's two largest cities lie on the river, providing a key element in their identities and a focal point in redevelopment efforts.
- Confronting the gaps in the lives of our residents. The Mind the Gap report, produced by the Itasca Project in collaboration with several foundations based in the metropolitan area, laid bare the discrepancies many residents face. Twin Cities Compass, a project of Wilder Research, is extending the effort begun in the Mind the Gap report by collecting data and organizing them in ways that government and non-governmental organizations can use to improve the lives of people who live here.